

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 172 157

CS 004 861

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 TITLE Reading Versus Listening: Modes of Presentation of a First-Grade Reading Test.
 PUB DATE Jan 79
 NOTE 48p.; M.Ed. Thesis; Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey; Best copy available; Appendixes were removed due to copyright restrictions
 EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
 DESCRIPTORS Beginning Reading; Grade 1; Language Skills; *Listening Comprehension; Oral Reading; Primary Education; *Reading Comprehension; Reading Instruction; *Reading Research; Silent Reading

ABSTRACT

The relationship between first graders' listening comprehension and reading comprehension was examined in a study involving 64 children. Two forms of the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test, Primary A, were administered--one orally and one silently. No significant difference was found between the mean score of the silent test and that of the oral test. In fact, a significant correlation of .317 between reading and listening comprehension was obtained.
 (Author/FL)

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READING VERSUS LISTENING: MODES OF PRESENTATION
OF A FIRST-GRADE READING TEST

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AN ABSTRACT OF A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY
OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
OF
RUTGERS
THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY
BY
ELEANOR K. HAUGH
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF
MASTER OF EDUCATION

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NEW BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY

JANUARY, 1979

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between listening comprehension and reading comprehension in first graders. The Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test, Primary A, was presented to 64 children in two different modes. The children were from a lower to middle-class, white, suburban New Jersey community. It was hypothesized that there would be a significant difference between the mean score of the reading test given orally and the mean score of the test given silently. This hypothesis was rejected.

A correlation between reading comprehension and listening comprehension was obtained. The correlation of .317 was found to be significant at the .05 level. This correlation is consistent with other studies done at the first-grade level whose median is reported to be .38.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writer wishes to express appreciation to her husband, Richard, and her children, Richard Jr., Stacey, Meredith, and Andrew for their support and concern shown during her lengthy graduate school career.

A special thanks is extended to the Berkeley Heights Public Schools for their cooperation in this study.

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

Background of the Problem

An examination of comprehension of material received orally and material received by reading is of interest to many educators. Listening and reading are both receptive communication skills. Some children have good reading skills and others have poor reading skills. At the first-grade level, some poor readers are good listeners and can comprehend information given orally very well. Conversely, good readers cannot always comprehend oral tasks with the ease that they exhibit with visual tasks. The relationship between reading skills and listening comprehension has been of greater interest in the last decade. Many elementary schools are using listening training programs in conjunction with basal reading series. These programs have been shown to increase listening skills, but their relationship to reading skills has yet to be adequately defined. There is some agreement that comprehension of material read and comprehension of material heard are probably calling upon similar "thinking" skills.

Statement of the Problem: Hypotheses

1. There will be a significant difference between the mean score of a silent form of a first-grade reading

test and the mean score of an oral form of the reading test.

2. There is a significant correlation between listening comprehension and reading comprehension at the first-grade level.

Importance of the Study

This study will examine the relationship between listening comprehension and reading comprehension at the first-grade level. If good listening comprehension is a sign of undeveloped reading potential and/or increased reading ability, then listening training might have an important place in a beginning reading program. Children working through their strengths have found success in learning situations. The discovery of a strong listening comprehension in combination with poor reading skills may aid in the development of a more suitable program for a child to achieve reading success.

Definition of Terms

Listening.--Oral presentation of the comprehension section of the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test, Primary A, Form 2.

Reading.--Silent presentation of the comprehension section of the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test, Primary A, Form 1.

Limitations of the Study

The wide maturational range of first graders is always a factor of which one must be cognizant when

examining the reading scores of first graders. No intelligence testing has been done on these children and therefore intelligence may be an underlying factor.

Most of the children in this study are white, lower middle class to upper middle class. This study cannot be generalized to a population that is not similar.

Presently these children are in a strongly phonetic basal reading series (Palo Alto).

Children with uncorrected hearing or visual problems will be eliminated but it is possible that some defects have not yet been detected.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Listening and Reading

First graders with normal hearing and vision obtain information in large measure through listening. Listening comprehension is a typically developed skill for most children at this stage (beginning first graders).

When reading is introduced to first graders, it often builds upon a listening foundation. Its aim is to allow children to obtain information in another fashion. The two activities, listening and reading, appear to have parallel structure. The following model from Lundsteen (1971) demonstrates one way of looking at this parallelism (Figure 1).

In Figure 1 the receptive language skills, listening and reading, occupy the left side of the model and interact with each other and with the expressive language activities which occupy the other side of the figure. Speaking or oral reading and writing are the two forms of expressive language. They interact with each other and with the receptive skills also. Listening and speaking or oral reading are counterparts and reading (silent) and writing are paired. Lundsteen uses the terms decoding and

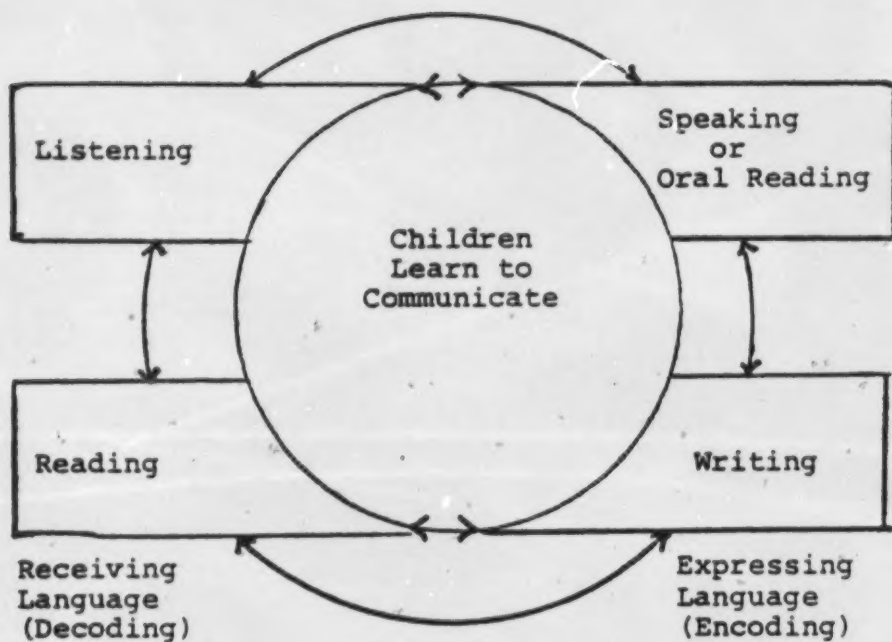


Figure 1. Lundsteen's model of communication.

encoding to further explain receiving language and expressing language.

Lundsteen has developed a tentative listening hierarchy which she divides into general listening and critical listening skills. In working with first graders, the general listening list is more relevant:

1. distinguishes hearing from listening,
2. demonstrates two-way listener responsibility,
3. selects facts and details,
4. sequential ordering,
5. selecting main idea,
6. summarizing,
7. relating, and
8. inference making.

She suggests that reading comprehension skills and listening comprehension skills be taught simultaneously so that positive transfer can occur. Because of the apparent parallel nature of the two activities, the use of one strength through which to teach another seems reasonable.

Horrworth (1966) suggests that the listening skills occupy a baseline position as in Figure 2. The receiving language skill of reading is developed from a base experience in listening as is the expressive language skill of writing as shown in Figure 2.

Weaver and Rutherford (1974) have accumulated information and developed a hierarchy of listening comprehension skills which they think are present in K-3 age

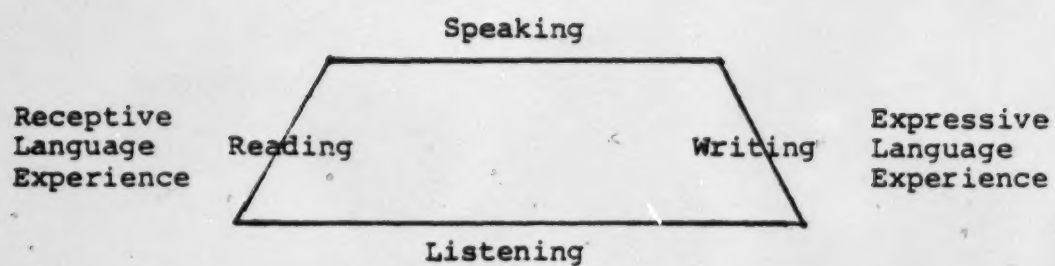


Figure 2. Listening occupies a baseline position in the development of language skills.

children. They are as follows:

1. recognizes verbal absurdities,
2. associates spoken word with picture,
3. associates auditory cues with motor responses,
4. uses new words learned by listening,
5. uses context clues to predict words in sentence,
6. relates new information to past experience,
7. identifies main idea of story,
8. sequences details correctly,
9. listens for specific information, and
10. follows travel directions.

With slight modifications this list could be used to describe reading comprehension skills.

Another way of analyzing listening and reading in terms of apparent common elements by the investigator is as follows (Figure 3).

Listening is a mental activity (Taylor, 1964). It is not just hearing. Listening involves making a mental response to stimuli. In the case of listening, the stimuli is auditory; in the case of reading, the stimuli that asks for a mental response is visual. These two skills are assimilative language skills drawing from a common experience base. They are based upon an understanding and interpreting of commonly agreed-upon symbols.

Durrell (1968) views a fully developed reader as having a listening to reading ratio of 100. In formulating his reading and listening test, he tested almost 4,000

Listening Comprehension	Reading Comprehension
Attending	Attending
Listens to another voice	Recognizes letters, words, phrases, sentences, pauses
Recognizes sounds, words, phrases, sentences, pauses	Listens to himself vocalize
Relates to prior experience	Relates to prior experience
Derives meaning	Derives meaning
Able to communicate meaning	Able to communicate meaning

Figure 3. Parallel development of listening comprehension and reading comprehension.

students at each grade level. The grade one ratio of listening to reading was 49%. Grade two ratio was 71% with the percentages going up thereafter. Durrell points out that the listening vocabulary of a first grader is about one and one-half years above that of his reading vocabulary. This becomes one year or less in second grade and as the child goes through the grades, the reading vocabulary equals and then may surpass the listening vocabulary. Durrell suggests that the listening comprehension of a retarded reader is indicative of his reading potential. The higher score in either listening or reading indicates a potential for the other, according to Durrell.

Tinker and McCullough (1968) have evidence that suggests that at lower grade levels, auditory comprehension is equal or better than reading comprehension. Above average readers seem to have better reading comprehension than auditory comprehension; poorer readers' auditory comprehension is equal or better than their reading comprehension. The general trend in support of the view that reading comprehension becomes better with age and surpasses listening comprehension in above average readers is confirmed by Tinker and McCullough. They feel that when decoding becomes automatic, comprehension improves.

Hollingsworth (1968) sees the relationship of reading to listening as being based upon the common elements of vocabulary, sentence structure, and organization of ideas.

Lundsteen (1971) views reading and listening as

supportive skills with initial strengths of listening comprehension enabling the strengthening of reading comprehension skills. "Relationship to prior experience" is a key phrase when thinking about reading and its relation to listening. Listening skills are the major way of getting information for the young child until he begins to read. Beginning reading methods rely on auditory skills and work through them to establish reading skills. Listening skills are the first first-graders' "prior experience." A bridge is constructed between a listening skill and its companion reading skill, i.e., the sound of the letter a, the look of the letter a; the sound of the word cat, the look of the word cat; the sound of an asking question, the look of an asking question; the hearing of a paragraph, the sight of a paragraph; hearing a fact and reading a fact; listening for a main idea, reading for a main idea. Reading develops through listening.

Day and Beach (1959) reviewed many studies concerning the relationship between listening and reading. They drew up 11 generalizations that they felt were supported in the literature of the field. Several of them are of interest to this study: (a) the greater the reading ability of the receivers, the relatively more effective the visual presentation; (b) efficiency of visual presentation increases with age from inferiority at age 6 to a possible superiority at age 16; and (c) the less the reader can re-read, the less advantage reading has over listening.

Swalm (1972) compared second, third, and fourth graders' listening and reading comprehension scores by using cloze procedure. He used three different treatments: oral reading, silent reading, and a taped presentation. His results showed that in above average readers, silent reading was the best for comprehension. In below average readers, listening and oral reading were the best for comprehension. The average readers scored the same by all three methods. Swalm suggests that oral reading makes comprehension better for below average readers because there is more reinforcement and attention paid to the material.

Developmental Aspects of Reading and Listening

According to Sticht et al. (1974) children are born with a set of basic adaptive processes which allow them to fit into their environment with comfort. Examples of these processes are seeing, hearing, and motor movements. These basic adaptive processes interact with the surroundings and enable the infant to move beyond them to more complex activities such as looking and listening.

The difference that exists between seeing and hearing, and looking and listening is crucial to the understanding of the model of reading as developed by Sticht. Looking and listening are actively used by the person to process information and are under the control of the person. The basic acts of seeing and hearing are mechanical in nature.

Human beings use looking and listening to form internalized concepts which represent the environment. The interaction of looking and listening with the material in the individual's store of knowledge is thought to be the way that conceptualizing occurs.

At about the age of two, children begin to use language. Language is the term used by Sticht to refer to the use of whatever signs the child has been exposed to for a period of time. These are largely but not necessarily spoken signs. They could be written, sign language, braille. The Sticht model uses the term *auding* to refer to that special kind of listening that enables a child to receive and communicate ideas by using previously agreed-upon signs (language) to stand for concepts. The language interacts between the cognitive development (or concept base) and the environment. The concept base is not part of the language system and it precedes the development of language.

After the child develops *auding*, that special kind of listening, a special kind of looking develops which Sticht calls *reading*. Reading is defined as looking at print and converting it to spoken language and then comprehending the meaning of the language. The more advanced reader directly converts looking at print to conceptualizing. This process should be occurring in the primary grades. The conversion occurs when reading becomes automatic. The printed symbols are automatically processed

using internal forms of speech and then on to a conceptualization. The child no longer has to pay attention solely to unlocking the printed letters. He can move directly to conceptualizing thereby comprehending the printed symbols. These symbols therefore interact with the concept base to bring the child to the stage of reading which includes understanding of what was read, remembering what was read, and the ability to apply and extend what was read to other situations in the environment. The beginning stages of reading are in the first grade. It is expected that not all children will be at the automatic stage, as described above, in the first grade. However this study should be interesting at the first-grade level to see just how many of them may be in that stage.

Both the listening/looking and the auding/reading processes take place with short-term memory time span although information can and probably is added from long-term memory when concepts are being formed.

The parallel nature of the two activities, listening and reading, are emphasized in this model. These receptive skills both change the spoken word, or spoken word written down, into meaningful messages drawing information from the concept base.

Correlations

Sam Duker's bibliography (1968) cites many studies which show strong correlations between listening and

reading. Goldstein (1940) reported a correlation of .78 between listening and reading comprehension. Blewett (1949), Brown (1949), Pratt (1950), and Duker (1964) all report significant correlations between listening and reading. Ruth Strang (1968) cites coefficients with a range of .45 to .70 with a mean of .58 in the studies which she examined that correlated reading and listening.

In an unpublished doctoral thesis, D. A. Spearitt (1961) correlated 34 different tests and isolated a factor which he identified as listening comprehension.

Sticht et al. published the results of many studies which reported correlations between reading and listening. Many different forms of tests and samples were used. In spite of the varied instruments of testing, a definite pattern emerged. At the first-grade level, correlations range from .18 to .50 with a median of .38. As the grades progress, the correlations become higher until fourth grade when the correlation remains fairly constant at .58 to .60. Sticht et al. refer to listening comprehension as "auding." The expectation of their work is that auding and reading have an increasing relationship with each grade level. After the child learns to read, the correlation between auding and reading skill will increase with a crossover (reading scores higher than listening scores) occurring at about sixth or seventh grade.

Summary

An examination of the relationship between listening comprehension and reading comprehension appears most

appropriate in the first grade because the introduction of the new process, reading begins there. The children are taught a new way of obtaining information. Therefore, reading needs to be compared to the existing way, listening, to determine whether or not a relationship exists.

In a master's thesis, Sandra Markert gave the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test to a group of second graders in two different modes. This study will attempt to extend that study downward to see what, if anything, happens in the first grade during the very initial stages of learning to read. Markert found the aural mode to be preferred one for young children, and reported a correlation of .45 between listening and reading.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURE

Alternate forms of the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test, Primary A, were given to 64 first graders in two different modes. Form 1 was administered silently and Form 2 was administered orally.

Sample

The children used in this study were first graders who live in a white lower middle-class to upper middle-class suburban New Jersey community. No children with known uncorrected visual or auditory problems were included.

Construction of the Instrument

The Gates tests were normed in 1971 on a nationwide sample of 40,000 students in 37 communities. The manual states that the sample was carefully selected to be representative of size, geographical location, educational level, and family income of the general population. The growth factor was accounted for by testing two times during the school year.

Reliability of the Gates tests is based upon alternate forms and split-half reliability coefficients. For the Primary A tests, split-half coefficients are reported

as .93 with a standard error of measurement of 3.1. Alternate form reliability is reported to be .87 with a standard error of 3.1. These are the figures for the comprehension section of the test.

The correlation reported between Form 1 and Form 2 of the Gates Primary A is .79. This is reported for the comprehension section of the tests. They are based on within-school correlations between two subtests on alternate forms of the test. The figure of .79 is an average value of all the within-school alternate form correlations.

Selection of the Test

The Gates test was chosen because it is standardized and has good reliability. It yields grade level scores which were needed to analyze the results. The listening comprehension version of the test could be done with the Gates test because of the simplicity of the pictorial presentation of ideas. The oral administration of the test could be done quite simply by removing the test.

Administration of the Test

The comprehension section of the Gates reading test was administered to groups of 10 children at a time. The same person administered all the tests at the same time of day and in the same room. Form 1 was given as directed in the manual. Form 2 was read to the children and they marked the pictures on an answer sheet. Groups A, C, E received the silent form of the test first and groups B,

D, F received the oral form of the test first to provide counterbalancing.

Statistical Treatment

The mean score of the silent form of the reading test was compared to the mean score of the listening form of the test by using a t-test. A simple correlation determined the relationship between the listening comprehension and the reading comprehension scores of the 64 first graders.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Presentation of Data

The first comparison was concerned with the difference between the silent form of a first-grade reading test and the oral form of the same reading test.

A t-test was computed for the 64 students in the class, to determine whether the difference between the oral and silent reading scores was significant. The t-test was adjusted for the fact that the same group took the same reading test on two occasions. The t-value of .09 indicated that there was no significant difference between the silent reading scores and the listening scores.

Table 1 presents the mean differences between the reading and listening scores.

For the silent comprehension portion of the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test, Primary A, the mean score was 28.7 with a standard deviation of 5.38. The mean listening score version of the reading comprehension test was 32.4 with a standard deviation of 3.27.

The second comparison was concerned with a possible correlation between the silent score mean and the listening mean of a first-grade reading test. A simple correlation

TABLE 1
MEAN DIFFERENCES BETWEEN READING AND
LISTENING SCORES (N = 64)

Mode of Presentation	Mean	<u>SD</u>	<u>t</u>
Reading	28.7	5.38	.09*
Listening	32.4	3.27	

*A t-value of 2.0, df 62, is required for significance at the .05 level.

of .317 was obtained between the two versions of the test. A correlation of .316 is significant at the .05 level.

Discussion

There is no evidence from this data that the listening scores and reading scores are different. It appears that the sample tested was achieving at a very high level for this form of the Gates test.

Although these children are in the beginning stages of learning to read, only eight of them scored below grade level on the silent form of the test, and all of them did very well on the listening form of the test. The mean raw score of 28.7 is only 6 points below a perfect score of 34.

A ceiling effect appeared to yield a low correlation in this study. The small range of very good listening scores served to reduce the correlation. The actual raw score range was 28 to 34. A wider range would have yielded a higher correlation.

Apparently the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test, Primary A, was inappropriate for this particular group of children in both modes of presentation.

It was interesting to note that poor readers, as identified by their teachers, did equally well on the listening form of the test as the good readers did. Only 8 out of 64 students were below grade level on the silent form of the test. The three classroom teachers would have identified many more than 8 as "poor readers." The

results may have been more significant if the Primary B test had been used. This test, according to the manual, is designed for second and third graders.

The correlation of .317, or 10% overlap, approaches the median figure of .38 for 19 studies cited by Sticht et al. (1974). The range of correlations between listening and reading at the first-grade level for different tests and samples is reported to be .18 to .50. This study is consistent with the group of correlations found in the literature.

Conclusions

The two comparisons made indicate that this group of children obtained information as well by listening as by silent reading. The difference that was expected did not exist for this particular group of children. This may be due to their high level of achievement in silent reading or to the level of the test given.

The acceptance of the relationship between reading and listening comprehension confirms the relationship as reported in the literature for first graders. The overlap of 10% although statistically significant is educationally not important.

CHAPTER V

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

It may be that this method of testing listening comprehension in this study was not a valid one. Other methods such as oral cloze testing, or some method which determined more accurately what it is that the child really has heard, should be explored. The attention factor may be the variable that regulates the amount of heard material that is being comprehended. These areas are difficult to assess with first graders. Future research may show better and more reliable ways of testing listening comprehension so that it may be compared to reading comprehension at this level.

A further interesting area is to explore and try to understand the dynamics that may exist among those students who scored much below grade level. What is presently striking for the eight lowest scoring youngsters in reading is that some of them also obtained scores perfect or near perfect in the listening form of the test.

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APPENDIX A--Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test, Primary A, Form 2;
 APPENDIX B--Directions for Administering the Listening
 Form of the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test, Primary A;
 APPENDIX C--Raw Scores of Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test,
 Primary A, Form 2. Were all removed due to copyright
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APPENDIX A

GATES-MACGINITIE READING TEST,
PRIMARY A, FORM 2

Comprehension

START HERE



1.



2.



3.



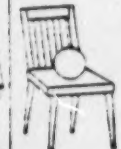
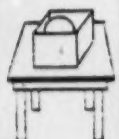
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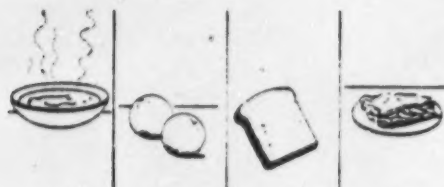
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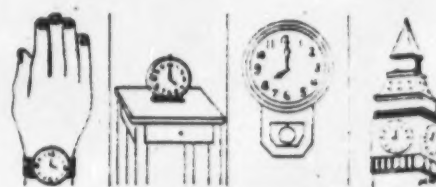
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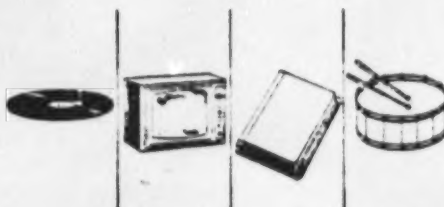
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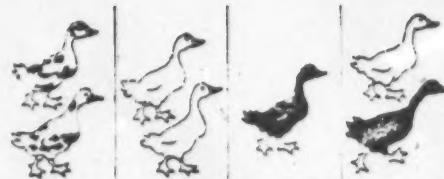
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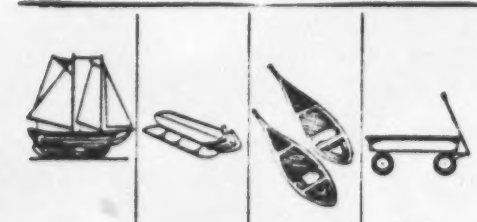
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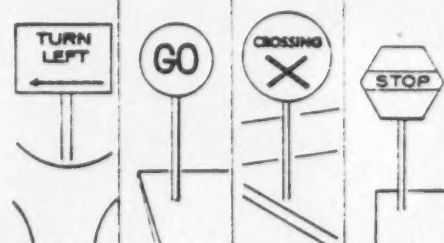
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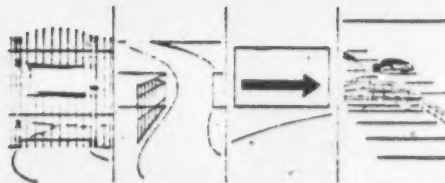
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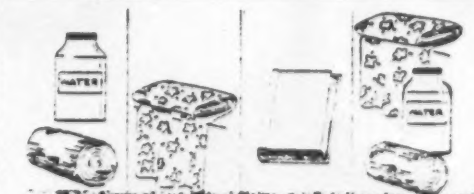
28.



32.



29.



33.



30.



34.

STOP

APPENDIX B

DIRECTIONS FOR ADMINISTERING THE LISTENING FORM
OF THE GATES-MACGINITIE READING TEST,
PRIMARY A

Distribute booklets and see that each child has a sharpened pencil.

Say: Listen carefully. I am going to ask you to put your whole name on the top of the page.

After you have done that, put your finger on number one. Do you see the row with four pictures in it? One of the pictures will go with the story I am going to tell you. Put a big X on the one picture in the row that goes with the story that you hear.

Let's do the sample together. See that all children understand the procedure before beginning the test.

Begin with number one. Read the story slowly and clearly. See that the children are only marking one picture in each row.

The test should take no more than 25 minutes to administer.

On the following page you will find the stories that go with the pictures on Form 2, altered version.

1. Mark the dog.
2. Where is the pig?
3. This is a bird.
4. Here is the girl.
5. Here are three eggs.
6. Mark the deer that is running.
7. The ball is in a box on the table.
8. Mark the goat eating grass.
9. Which cookies are star-shaped?
10. The book he liked best had a picture on the cover.
11. The boy is holding his hat over the dog's head.
12. For breakfast he wanted a dish of hot cereal.
13. He wore a clown mask to the party.
14. She wanted a record to play in school.
15. Which is the long train?
16. Mark the clock that hangs on the wall.
17. They are trying to read the sign in front of the house.
18. The store is at the street corner.
19. Which sign means you should not walk on the lawn?
20. The most useful animal for the desert is the camel. He can travel a long time without water or food. What is the best animal for crossing the desert?
21. Mary has been to the store for her mother. Now she is putting away the things that she bought.
22. When it snows in winter boys and girls take out their sleds. Mark what they ride on when it snows.
23. Some ducks were walking to the lake. A white duck and

a black duck came first. Then came a spotted duck and a black duck. Two white ducks came last. Which ducks came first?

24. One of these dolls has lost her leg. Where is the lost leg?
25. Quick as a flash she jumped out of bed. She knew that voice. It was Uncle Ed arriving home at midnight from his fishing trip.
26. Which sign means to stay where you are?
27. It looks like a great silver bird. Johnny knows it is flying very fast through the air. Which one is it?
28. Mother is making a new dress for Kathy. It is almost finished. She is measuring the length of the dress and Kathy is standing very still so it will be straight.
29. They wanted to find the road to the fair. As soon as they read the sign, they knew they were on the right road.
30. A little girl was crying. "Why are you crying?" asked a woman. "I lost the money my mother gave me to buy milk," she said. What did the little girl lose?
31. They knew they were going the right way because the gate was open.
32. John's father took him to the shoe store for new shoes. When the shoe salesman saw where John's shoes were worn out, he brought out two different boxes. John got his wish--new school shoes and new football shoes.
33. Paper is made by mixing and mashing wood with water.

The best paper has cloth in it too. Which picture has all the things needed to make the best paper?

34. One caterpillar found a branch and rolled itself into a cocoon. When the cocoon opened again it was spring and a beautiful butterfly flew out. Where was the cocoon all winter?

APPENDIX C

RAW SCORES OF GATES-MACGINITIE READING TEST,
PRIMARY A

Number	Silent Score	Listening Score
1	34	34
2	34	34
3	34	34
4	34	33
5	34	33
6	34	33
7	34	32
8	34	32
9	34	31
10	33	34
11	33	34
12	33	34
13	33	34
14	33	33
15	33	33
16	33	33
17	33	33
18	33	33
19	33	33
20	33	33
21	33	32
22	32	33
23	32	33
24	32	33
25	32	33
26	32	32
27	32	32
28	32	30
29	32	28
30	31	34
31	31	34
32	31	34
33	31	32
34	30	34
35	30	33
36	30	32
37	30	32
38	30	30
39	29	34
40	29	32
41	28	33
42	28	33
43	28	31
44	27	34
45	27	32
46	27	31
47	26	33

(continued)

Number	Silent Score	Listening Score
48	26	32
49	25	33
50	25	32
51	25	31
52	24	33
53	22	31
54	22	31
55	22	31
56	21	33
57	20	32
58	20	32
59	19	33
60	19	32
61	19	31
62	18	30
63	15	30
64	14	34
Mean	28.7	32.47

Administered May 1978; N = 64.